

178    *THE CASTAWAYS OF  
THE FLAG*

in her eyes an anxiety for which,  
however, there  
was no justification as yet. Frank,  
too, felt  
some nervousness, walking on in front  
and then  
retracing his steps. This uneasiness  
was shared  
by all. In ten minutes they would be at  
Falcon-  
hurst. Ten minutes ! Was not that  
much the  
same as being there already ?

" It's a sure thing/<sup>3</sup> said the boatswain,  
who  
wanted to cheer them up, " it's a sure  
thing that  
we shall have to go down this fine  
avenue of yours  
to Rock Castle! A delay of an hour,  
that's all.  
And what's an hour, after so long an  
absence ? " y  
They put on pace, A few moments later  
they  
came within sight of the edge of the  
wood, and  
then of the enormous mangrove tree in  
the middle  
of the court-yard, enclosed by  
palisades fringed  
with a quickset hedge.

Fritz and Frank ran to the gate  
contrived in  
the hedge.

The gate was open, and had been  
torn half off  
its hinges.

The two brothers went into  
the court-yard  
and stopped beside the little central  
basin.

The place was deserted.

Not a sound came from the poultry  
run or,

the sheds built against the palisade,  
although  
these were generally full of cows and  
sheep and  
poultry during the summer season. In  
the out-  
houses were various things, boxes and  
hampers